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CULVER CITY SCENIC ROUTES PLAN

THE SCENIC HIGHWAY ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

September 1975

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**Planning Division
Culver City, California**

CULVER CITY SCENIC ROUTES PLAN

THE SCENIC HIGHWAY ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

September 1975

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I. Introduction

CULVER CITY SCENIC ROUTES PLAN

The Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

Section 65302 (h) of the Government Code of the State of California requires a General Plan to include "a scenic highway element for the development, establishment, and protection of scenic highways pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code. The scenic highway element is to designate specific streets and highways and the abutting land as scenic routes and to provide standards for the development or preservation thereof."

The State of California has designated certain highways as being eligible for scenic highway status as listed in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. No streets in Culver City are included in this list. However, local governmental agencies may designate additional streets within their jurisdictions as scenic routes and prepare development standards for these routes. Therefore, this Scenic Routes Plan addresses itself to certain streets in Culver City that are herein officially designated by the City as being local scenic routes.

A. Purpose

Traditionally, streets had been constructed to provide access to developing parcels of land or to provide access across town through intervening areas. Little or no consideration was given to the appearance or physical design of the street or its impact upon abutting land beyond the aspect of merely providing property access along the street frontage. Historically, in Culver City, Washington Boulevard evolved from an oxen trail of the Spanish rancho era. Over the years, right-of-way for the street was dedicated by the developers of the abutting land. The size of the right-of-way, its alignment, and the way in which it was improved varied from one portion of the street to another. Other major streets in the City frequently followed old rancho subdivision lines or railroad rights-of-way and were similarly improved at different times as abutting properties were developed. Other than minimum width requirements and construction requirements, no standards existed to assure a unified and attractive development of the street or of the abutting development along the street right-of-way.

Today, the street is recognized as a more important element of the community than as merely a means of intracity access. The appearance and development of a street and of the property abutting can have a significant influence on the economic desirability and viability of the businesses fronting on it, on the maintenance of the property, and thereby on the social and economic environment of the neighboring residential areas. Additionally, special consideration in the design of the street can minimize the deleterious aspects of a heavily trafficked street upon residential areas and buildings that immediately abut that street.

The purpose of the Scenic Routes Plan is, therefore, to assure that the future development of existing and new streets in Culver City will occur in a manner physically and aesthetically beneficial to the community by specifically designating those streets which constitute the primary travel, business, and visual routes through the City, by establishing standards for the design of these street rights-of-way, including street medians, parkways, landscaping, street furniture and signs, and by establishing certain criteria for the development of the property abutting the street.

B. Definition of Terms

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| City Portal: | Approach points into the City of Culver City on or near the City limits along designated scenic routes or major boulevards. |
| Designated Major Boulevard: | The major circulation routes or areas of business activity within Culver City in addition to streets designated as scenic routes. |
| Designated Local Scenic Routes: | Those streets and other lineal areas that traverse Culver City that have existing or potentially unique physical or visual features which are or can be aesthetically pleasing. |
| Landscaping: | Within this plan, landscaping is used in two contexts: 1. specific planting material, including grass, ground cover, shrubs, and/or trees; and 2. all elements of landscape design, including planting material, irrigation systems, walls, paving, and street furniture. |
| Railroad Right-of-Way: | See Appendix A. |
| Roadway: | The paved portion of a street right-of-way upon which vehicles travel or are parked. |
| Scenic Focal Point: | Specific parcels of land or structures that due to their location or their design can contribute to the visual amenities of the scenic routes or major boulevards. |
| Street Furniture: | Fixtures and other accessories used to equip a street right-of-way for vehicular and, in particular, pedestrian use. Examples include benches, landscape containers, drinking and ornamental fountains, and information signs. |
| Street Median: | The central, unused portion of a roadway except when utilized for a left-turn |

lane. Medians separate lanes of traffic traveling in opposing directions and may therefore use raised curbing. Medians can be used for landscaping or locating signs and light standards.

Street
Parkway:

That portion of a street right-of-way which includes the curb, sidewalk, and often areas for landscaping.

Street Right-
of-Way:

The linear, publicly owned strip of land over which vehicular and pedestrian access to abutting private property is made. The right-of-way includes the roadway and the parkways and may include a median.

Streetscapes:

The area visible along or surrounding a roadway that is or has the potential of becoming aesthetically pleasing. Streetscapes include the surrounding landscaping, architecture, signing, or other visually prominent elements.

II. Designated Local Scenic Routes

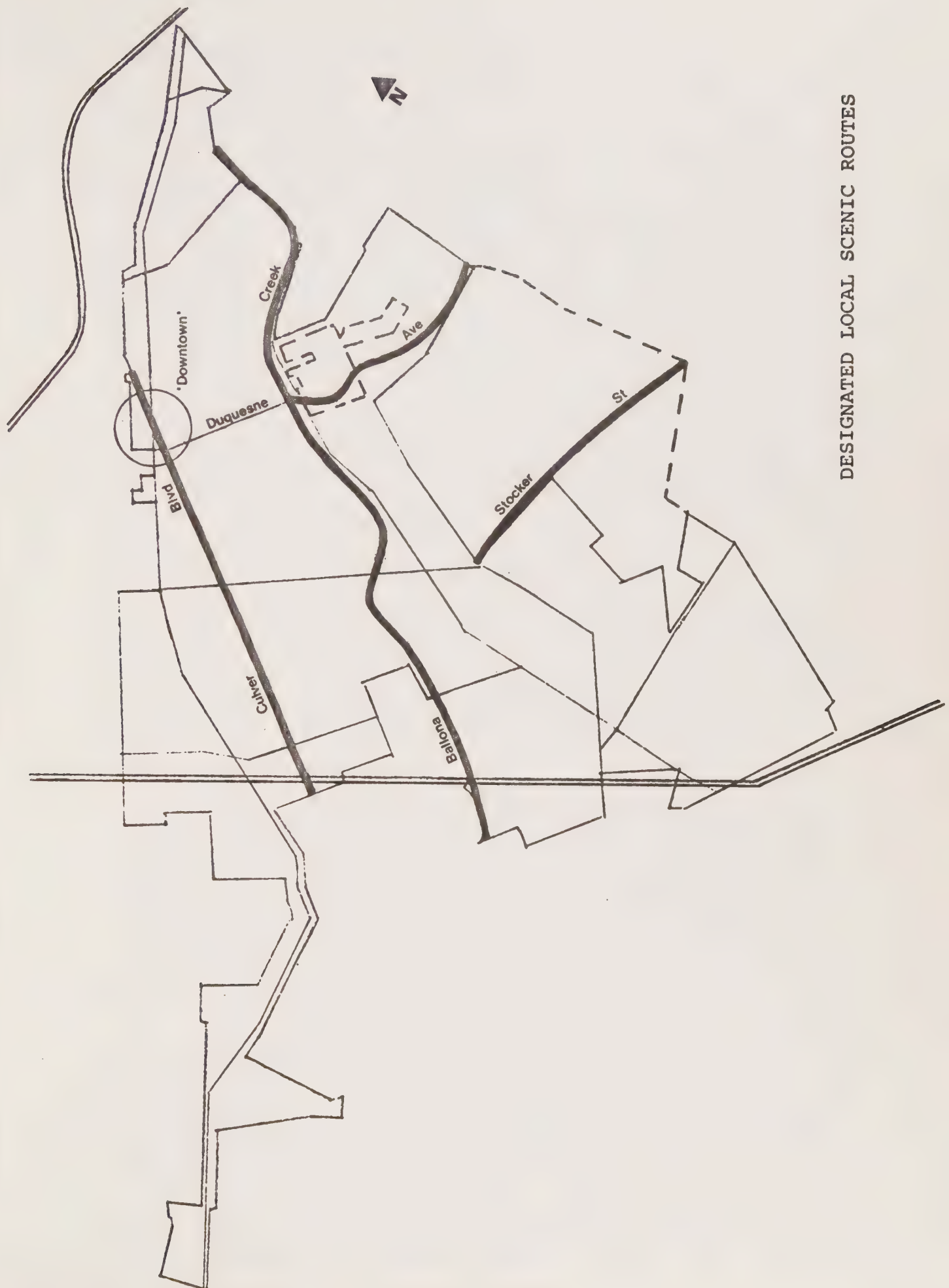
II. Designated Local Scenic Routes

Culver City has no State-designated scenic highways; however, as local jurisdictions may designate their own local scenic routes, this element of the General Plan of Culver City hereby designates four scenic routes that are within either the incorporated boundaries of the City or are within unincorporated County territory abutting the City which has been officially designated as being within Culver City's sphere of influence. Additional scenic routes may be added to this list by subsequent amendments to this element.

The designated Local Scenic Routes for Culver City are:

1. Culver Boulevard --from the northerly City limit at Venice Boulevard to the westerly City limit at Sawtelle Boulevard
2. The proposed extension of Duquesne Avenue -- from Jefferson Boulevard to La Cienega Boulevard
3. The proposed extension of Stocker Street -- from Overland Avenue to La Cienega Boulevard
4. The Ballona Creek -- from McManus Park near National Boulevard to the westerly City limit near Emporia Avenue

The designation of proposed streets as scenic routes in this element of the General Plan does not constitute adoption of these proposed streets as circulation routes. This Scenic Routes Plan supplements the Circulation Element of the General Plan in which routes are officially adopted. This Scenic Routes Plan only establishes development standards for these potential routes in the event any proposed street is adopted and constructed. At the time of the initial adoption of this element, the extension of Duquesne Avenue is an adopted route of the Circulation Element; the extension of Stocker Street between La Cienega Boulevard and Sophomore Drive is not an adopted route.



DESIGNATED LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

Diagram 1. DESIGNATED LOCAL SCENIC ROUTES

A. Culver Boulevard

1. Designation Criteria

Culver Boulevard is one of the major existing thoroughfares of Culver City, diagonally traversing the northwestern part of the City, including passing through the downtown area and passing beside the large Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio lots enroute to its termination at the ocean in Playa del Rey. Culver Boulevard originates at Venice Boulevard near the northerly City limits of Culver City, common with the city limit of Los Angeles. Subsequent to the adoption of this element, scheduled improvements to Venice Boulevard will provide full access to Culver Boulevard for vehicles on Venice Boulevard. This will provide access to Culver Boulevard from the nearest off-ramps of the Santa Monica Freeway via Robertson and Venice Boulevards. Additionally, the Circulation Element has adopted a proposed direct extension of Robertson Boulevard into Culver Boulevard at the Venice Boulevard intersection. This would provide direct access from the Santa Monica Freeway on-ramps and off-ramps to Culver Boulevard and thereby establish Culver Boulevard as the primary entryway into downtown and central Culver City.

Due to the development of Culver Boulevard along both sides of a railroad right-of-way (except along the M.G.M. lots) in which there is still one active rail line, the overall right-of-way width of Culver Boulevard -- as much as 180 feet -- establishes this street as one of the most significant visual and physical elements of the Culver City urban fabric.

Therefore, due to its importance as major arterial street serving the northwestern part of the City and leading ultimately to the ocean, due to its future importance as the primary entryway into downtown Culver City, due to its visual and physical impact upon the community because of its right-of-way width, and due to its developmental potential for the same reason, Culver Boulevard has the necessary criteria to constitute a scenic route through an urban area.

2. Development Standards

The following standards for the development of Culver Boulevard are based upon the concepts that its wide, overall right-of-way should be utilized for various activities to its fullest potential, and that the existing rail line shall remain but should be so located and designed as to maximize its compatibility with all the other uses of this right-of-way.

Due to the different widths of the right-of-way and the varying conditions or situations of abutting properties, Culver Boulevard is separated into three sections for this plan.

a. Downtown: Venice Boulevard to Jackson Avenue

- (1) Right-of-Way Utilization. The total right-of-way width, including the median railroad right-of-way, is 140 feet for this portion of Culver Boulevard. The single railroad line should be relocated to the center of the right-of-way, and a street median of 32 feet width (16 feet on each side of the centerline) should be constructed as per diagram 2. Twenty feet of the median (10 feet on each side of the centerline) would remain railroad right-of-way and shall be free of any fixed obstacles as required by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, hereinafter referred to as the Southern Pacific Railroad. (See Appendix A.) The left-turn pockets of 10 feet width would be located within the medians.

Two traffic lanes and one parking lane, totalling 33 feet in width, would be located on each side of the median. The remainder of the 140-foot right-of-way could be utilized as 21-foot-wide parkways.

- (2) Median Development. Within the 32-foot-wide median, the middle 20 feet, symmetrically located 10 feet on each side of the centerline of the entire street right-of-way, also being the centerline of the railroad tracks, would be paved flat with asphaltic concrete in conformance with requirements of the Southern Pacific Railroad and would be free of any fixed objects (unless otherwise permitted or required by the railroad).

On both sides of the 20-foot wide center paved area there could be six-foot-wide planting areas. These planting areas should be bordered with standard raised concrete curbs on all sides. The planting areas should be landscaped and irrigated and could also be used for locating any necessary signing, signal poles, or other directional equipment. Such equipment should be limited only to that absolutely necessary. Any such necessary equipment that may be alternatively located in the parkways should be so located. The planting areas would be terminated wherever a left-turn pocket would be located.

Additionally, at the singular location before Fire Station No. 1, at 9760 Culver Boulevard, there shall be no raised curbing or planted areas in the median so as to permit ready access for fire and rescue vehicles to the opposite side of Culver Boulevard.

Landscaping along both sides of the median

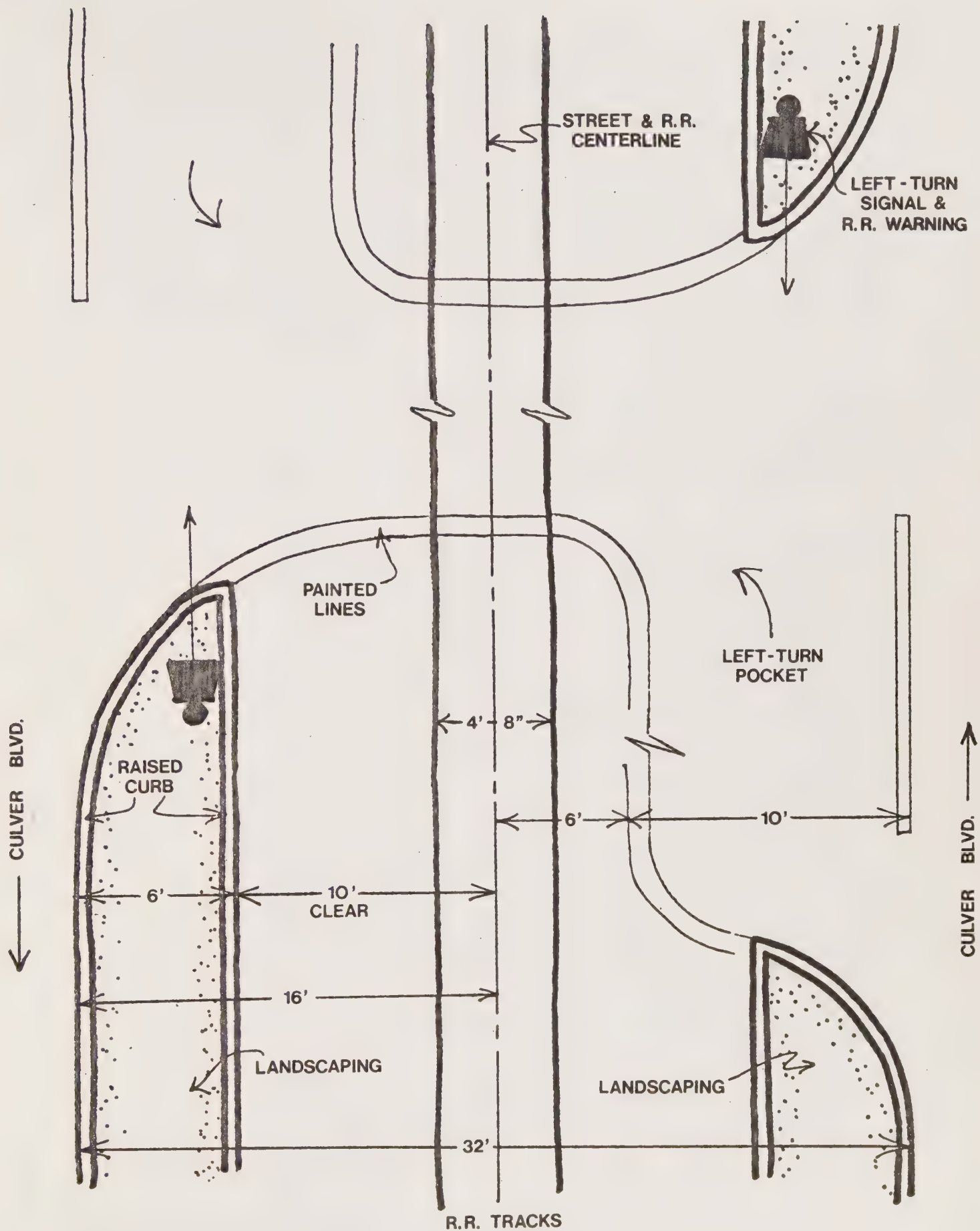


Diagram 2. CULVER BOULEVARD MEDIAN DESIGN AT INTERSECTING STREET

should be full, evergreen, and of a scale to generally screen the railroad tracks from passing motorists. Therefore, most ground covers will not be appropriate. Additionally, however, the plant species should not be of a scale to restrict the view of on-coming vehicles for persons making left turns, of on-coming trains and of buildings and facilities located along the opposite side of the street. As a result, the landscaping should consist of plant species growing to between two and four feet in height. Examples of appropriate plants include the species of aucuba, berberis, ceanothus, cotoneaster, viburnum, and the like.

Due to the need for visibility along these medians, trees should not be planted unless they are very visually "unobstrusive" (i.e., thin trunks, high foliage, tall, narrow conformation, such as some of the smooth bark eucalyptus [e.g., eucalyptus polyanthemos]).

- (3) Parkway Development. As the portion of Culver Boulevard east of Jackson Street Traverses the present old downtown area which is proposed to be redeveloped with higher intensity commercial and professional uses, the 21-foot-wide parkways may be developed in various manners appropriate to this urban setting. The majority of these parkways will most likely be paved, as this would facilitate the heavy pedestrian traffic anticipated for the downtown area. The paving should be ornamental. The most desirable would be herringbone brick paving placed upon a concrete sub-base. The brick pattern offers a visually stimulating texture; it is readily removed and replaced for utility and paving repairs without leaving any visible patches (as with concrete or asphalt); it readily accommodates tree wells, planters, and drain openings within its geometry; and the brick material lacks the glare and heat reflection of concrete. However, since the construction costs for all-brick paving will probably preclude its use in Culver City, the alternative is to use exposed aggregate concrete squares of three-or four-foot lengths with laid brick expansion joints creating a grid pattern. In this event, tree wells should conform to this grid. The texture of exposed pebbles, cobblestones, or terrazzo (slippery) prevents their use for pedestrian surfaces for safety reasons. These materials should not be used.

Landscaping in the parkways may vary in terms of size and type of specie. Trees should be the same specie and should not have a large, dense

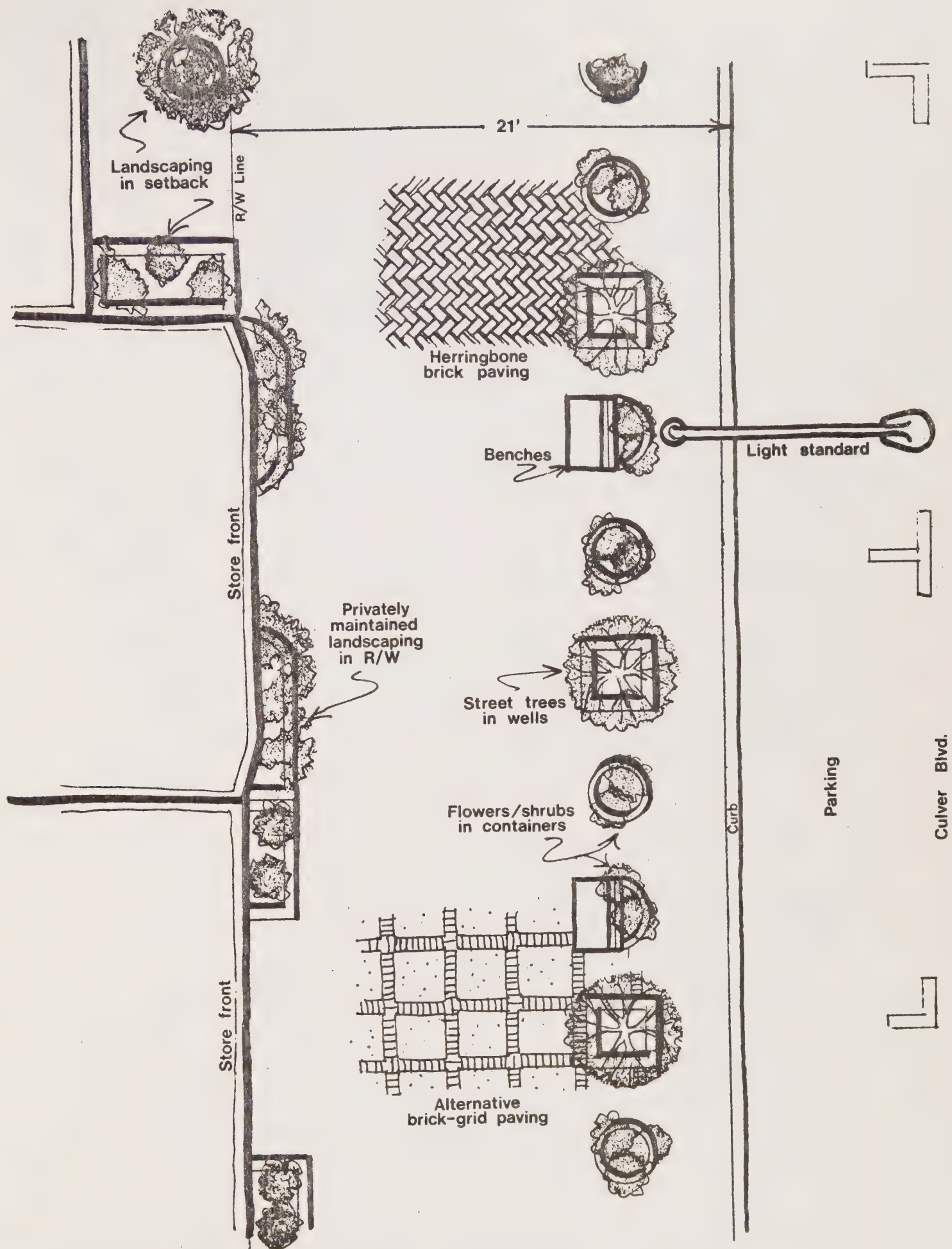


Diagram 3. CULVER BOULEVARD PARKWAY DESIGN -- DOWNTOWN

foliage that will significantly restrict the visibility of storefronts and signs. Examples of acceptable trees include certain species of acacia, betula, eucalyptus, ficus, hymenosporum, and melaleuca.

Additionally, there could be flowering evergreen shrubs located in either planter wells or raised planters. The shrubs may match and thereby complement the shrub species used in the median landscaping, or they may vary greatly in type and size. The shrubs (and flowers) need not be uniform in appearance as is required of the street trees. Older buildings that abut the street right-of-way should be permitted to maintain planter areas that encroach into the right-of-way for a distance not to exceed three feet. This would enable a significant increase in the landscaping along the storefront side of the parkways, complementing the City maintained tree and shrub landscaping along the curb side.

Public benches, preferably designed or located in conjunction with the landscaping should be provided at regular intervals along the parkways.

b. Studio Strip: The northwesterly side of Culver Boulevard between Jackson Avenue and Elenda Street.

- (1) Right-of-Way Utilization. The overall right-of-way width, including the railroad, is 120 feet, 30 feet of which is located northwest of the centerline, ninety feet of which is located southeast of the centerline.

The railroad tracks should be relocated onto the centerline, and the median should be 32 feet wide as described above in 2.a. (1) in the section on "Downtown" as per diagram 2. On the southeast side of the median, there should be two traffic lanes and a parking lane totalling 33 feet in width. The parkway would be 41 feet wide. Further discussion on the development of the southeast side of Culver Boulevard follows below in 3.c. (3) in the section on "Westside."

On the northwest side of the median along the M.G.M. Studio land, there should also be two traffic lanes and a parking lane totalling 33 feet in width except where Culver Boulevard abuts the Southern California Edison Substation at Overland Avenue, at which point there could be only two traffic lanes, as described below.

Along the studio property, the right-of-way will have to be increased by an additional thirty feet in order to accommodate the 33 feet of traffic

and parking lanes and an 11-foot-wide parkway.

Along the substation, the right-of-way will have to be increased 13 feet in order to accommodate two 11-foot-wide traffic lanes and a 5-foot parkway. There would be no parking lane. Existing facilities at the substation preclude any larger right-of-way acquisition. The 13-foot-wide right-of-way expansion will necessitate the acquisition of an access road along the Culver Boulevard substation fence servicing the substation transformers. This could be exchanged with a new access road on the opposite side of the transformers by the acquisition of land from the adjacent MGM studio lot.

- (2) Median Development. The 32-foot-wide median shall be developed as described above in 2.a. (2) in the section of "Downtown."
- (3) Parkway Development. The 11-foot-wide parkway on the northwesterly side of Culver Boulevard could be developed in one of two manners, depending on the type of development that will occur on the present studio property.

If the property remains as studio in use or is developed into residential use, either of which will generate relatively little pedestrian traffic, the parkway should be developed with a typical five-foot-wide sidewalk and a six-foot-wide landscaped parkway strip along the curb side. The landscaping should consist of regularly spaced trees and grass or other ground cover.

If the property is developed into commercial or office use, which would generate significantly more pedestrian traffic, the parkway should be fully paved in conformance with the standards described above in 2.a. (3) in the section on "Downtown." There should be regularly spaced trees and other landscaping in wells.

The five-foot-wide parkway along the Edison Substation should be paved only and have no landscaping due to its narrow width. However, to soften the appearance of this portion of the parkway, the Edison wall may be planted with *Ficus repens* (creeping fig) or a similar planting material.

- c. Westside: Elenda Street to the City Limit near Sawtelle Boulevard; and the southeasterly side of Culver Boulevard between Jackson Avenue and Elenda Street.

- (1) Right-of-Way Utilization. The total right-of-way width, including the median railroad right-of-way, is 180 feet for the portion of Culver Boulevard west of Elenda Street. The single railroad line should be relocated to the center of the right-

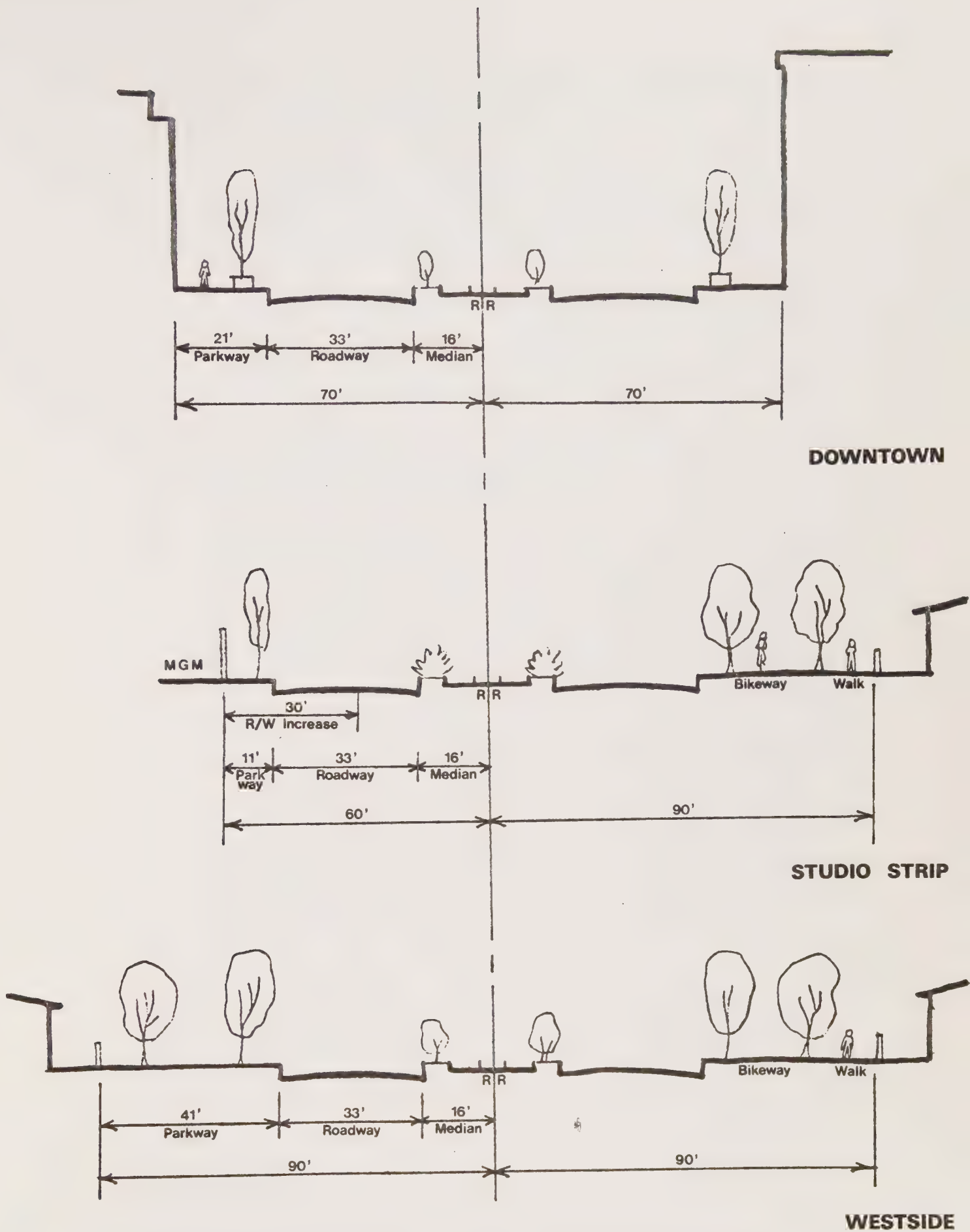


Diagram 4. CULVER BOULEVARD SECTIONS LOOKING NORTHEAST

of-way, and a street median of 32 feet width (16 feet on each side of the centerline) and should be constructed as described above in 2.a. (1) in the section on "Downtown," as per diagram 2.

Two traffic lanes and one parking lane, totalling 33 feet in width, should be located on both sides of the median. The remainder of the 180-foot right-of-way could be utilized as 41-foot-wide parkways.

The southeasterly side of Culver Boulevard between Jackson Avenue and Elenda Street (opposite the M.G.M. Studio property) also has a ninety-foot dimension from the centerline to the right-of-way line and should also be developed with a 41-foot-wide parkway.

- (2) Median Development. The 32-foot-wide median should be developed as described above in 2.a. (2) in the section on "Downtown."
- (3) Parkway Development. As the land abutting Culver Boulevard west of Elenda Street and on the southeasterly side of Culver Blvd. opposite the M.G.M. studio lots is almost exclusively residential or park in development, the 41-foot-wide parkways should be developed as lineal parks. The existing five-foot-wide sidewalks for pedestrian use should remain at their present location along the abutting property lines. Within the remaining thirty-six feet there could be an eight-foot-wide paved bikeway located closer to the curb. The remainder of the parkway should be landscaped with grass, ground cover, shrubs, and a double row of trees. The trees should be spreading in conformation, such as the *Ulmus parviflora sempervirens* which are presently used extensively within the City or, for more color and visual stimulation, the *Erythrina caffra* presently used along San Vicente Boulevard in Brentwood and Santa Monica.

d. General Development

Street Lights: Street light standards should be regularly spaced and uniform in design for the entire length of Culver Boulevard. They should be located only in the parkways to minimize the necessary number of poles and other equipment that must be located in the median along the railroad tracks. For uniformity of appearance, elimination of distracting glare, and elimination of discoloration, all street lights should be either incandescent or mercury vapor; sodium vapor lights should be eliminated.

Railroad Signaling: The narrowness of the street median

precludes the use of crossing gates. (A wider median significantly increases the difficulty of left-turn movements, thereby endangering the safety of motorists. In light of the infrequent rail traffic versus the increasing volume of automobile traffic, the median width should accommodate the latter.) As the left-turn pockets are partially located within that portion of the railroad right-of-way that must be kept free of any fixed objects, signals controlling left-turn movements should be located directly ahead of the left-turn pockets in the opposing median. All left-turn pockets and crossings shall be controlled with lights, arrows, warning bells, and, if necessary, blackout signs stating "DO NOT ADVANCE," or the equivalent.

Street Signs: All traffic and other directional signs and parking control signs should be uniform in design and, whenever possible, should utilize international symbols. The number of signs should be kept the necessary minimum and, whenever possible, should be grouped on the same sign pole, or preferably, on street light standards.

Private Signs: Provisions should be made to minimize the number and size of signs along Culver Boulevard to enhance the parklike development of the right-of-way. Signs should not be allowed to project into the right-of-way, nor should any billboards be permitted along the right-of-way.

Architectural Design. All new construction and any alterations or additions to existing structures along Culver Boulevard should be designed to be compatible with adjoining structures and with the parkway development itself. Commercial structures in particular should be designed to take advantage of the wide parkway development with such complementary amenities as large entryways, plazas, seating facilities, display windows, and landscaping.

Private Landscaping. All new construction and any major alterations along the street are now required to provide setbacks from the front property line. These setbacks should be fully landscaped, including ornamentally paved areas offering access to doors and display windows, and the plant material should be complementary with the parkway landscaping. For existing structures lacking setbacks, provisions should be made for them to utilize part of the parkway for privately maintained landscaping.

Utility Poles: All overhead utilities should be placed underground or should be relocated so as not to be visible from the right-of-way. Overhead lines should not laterally traverse Culver Boulevard at intersecting streets.

Driveways: To enhance the park-like development of Culver Boulevard and to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, the number of driveways crossing the parkways should be minimized. Vehicular access to property fronting on Culver Boulevard should be via side streets or rear alleys. Unnecessary existing driveways and curb cuts should be eliminated.

3. Implementation

Subsequent to the adoption of this element, specific implementation procedures regarding the acquisition of railroad right-of-way property, studio property, and utility property for expanding the Culver Boulevard right-of-way shall be amended to this element.

The physical improvements to the Culver Boulevard right-of-way itself, should be made in conjunction with the Washington/Culver Redevelopment Project No. 3 utilizing redevelopment and/or State allocated gas tax funds.

Overhead utility lines located within the proposed third redevelopment project area should be placed underground in conjunction with the project; lines outside the project area should be placed underground by means of an undergrounding district. Provisions should be made to prevent new overhead lines from being installed in any area where utility lines had previously been placed underground.

City restrictions on private signing should be modified to reduce or prevent signs projecting into the public right-of-way.

Architectural review procedures should be continued to assure that future construction along Culver Boulevard complements the parkway development.

B. Duquesne Avenue Extension

1. Designation Criteria

Duquesne Avenue as it presently exists is a collector street that traverses the central part of Culver City in an east-westerly direction from Washington Boulevard in the downtown area to Jefferson Boulevard at the base of the Baldwin Hills. Duquesne Avenue has the only bridge across the Ballona Creek for approximately a mile in either direction along the creek.

The proposed extension of Duquesne Avenue will continue this collector route through the Baldwin Hills to an intersection with La Cienega Boulevard at a point south of the Blair Hills residential neighborhood. This extension will provide access to the community's Ron Smith Field ballpark, a secondary access to West Los Angeles College, and access to the northerly part of the proposed Baldwin Hills Regional Park. Except for oil drilling operations which will be phased out of existence in future years, the extension of Duquesne Avenue will traverse undeveloped land. It is anticipated that the County's development of the regional park will maintain (or revert back) this part of the Baldwin Hills to natural terrain and flora. Additionally, because of the relatively steep westerly slopes of the Baldwin Hills, the proposed route for the Duquesne Avenue extension should provide many vistas of western Los Angeles, including the skylines of Beverly Hills, Westwood and Santa Monica; the Santa Monica Mountains; and the coastline of Santa Monica Bay.

Therefore, due to its importance as a continuation of an important collector street, due to its providing access to and traversing through a natural park setting, and due to the scenic vistas it will offer, the extension of Duquesne Avenue has the necessary criteria to constitute a scenic route.

2. Development Standards

a. Right-of-Way Utilization.

At present there exists no right-of-way for this extension into the Baldwin Hills. Existing Duquesne Avenue will be widened to 80 feet (64-foot wide roadway and eight-foot parkways). This will accommodate four traffic lanes without any median. Duquesne Extension should also accommodate four traffic lanes in addition to a median and wider parkways which should include bikeways leading into the proposed regional park. An appropriate right-of-way width to accommodate these needs would be 100 feet.

Of the 100 feet, there should be four 12-foot traffic lanes (no parking lanes) and a 12-foot-wide

median. The remainder of the right-of-way would be two 20-foot-wide parkways.

Additionally, wherever appropriate due to available vistas, there should be parking turnouts in the parkways which may require additional right-of-way land at these locations.

b. Median Development.

The 12-foot-wide median should be constructed with standard raised curbs to restrict cars from crossing the median on the steep grades and to prevent U-turns or other maneuvers that may be hazardous due to the grades and curves along the route.

Breaks in the median should be minimized. However, left-turn pockets would be located in the median and would occur at the intersection of Freshman Drive, the Ron Smith Field access road, and any park access roads.

Median landscaping should reflect the park development abutting the street. At those locations where the park will be landscaped and irrigated, the median should be similarly landscaped and irrigated.

At those locations where native shrubs will remain -- which is anticipated to be the majority of the route -- the median should also include native shrubs. Examples of median trees and large shrubs appropriate for this environment include the species rhus, ceanothus, modrones, lynothamus, and berberis.

c. Parkway Development.

The 20-foot-wide parkways should be constructed with rolled curbs and gutters to enable emergency off-road parking except at those locations where adjoining terrain presents a hazardous condition. In these instances, there should be a standard raised curb.

At appropriate locations offering vistas of the Santa Monica Bay or of the mountains, there should be turnouts recessed into the parkway providing parking spaces parallel to the street. Curbs should be raised at these locations. An alternative to this would be to provide parking areas at "lookout points" actually separate from the street, connected via an access road. In these instances, such facilities would probably be part of the park development and not part of the street development.

Bikeways should be located when terrain permits in both parkways as far from the roadway as is possible. In instances where the grade may be too severe for

bicyclists, the bikeway may route itself into the park and then return to the street parkway, thereby acquiring additional distance and reducing the grade.

Landscaping in the parkways should reflect the park development abutting the street. At those locations where the park will be landscaped and irrigated, the parkways should be similarly landscaped and irrigated. At those locations where native shrubs will remain, which will be the majority of the route, the parkways should also include native shrubs. Additional large shrubs and trees appropriate for this environment should be planted in the parkways between the curbs and the bikeways. Examples of such trees and shrubs are listed above in the description of the median development.

d. General Development

Street Lights: Street light standards should be double-masted and located in the median. They should be regularly spaced and uniform in design for the entire length of the extension of Duquesne Avenue from Jefferson Boulevard to La Cienega Boulevard. Due to the high visibility of this proposed hillside street from the western Los Angeles/Santa Monica Bay area, the street lighting should not be aesthetically offensive due to excessive glare or discoloration. Therefore, all street lighting should be either incandescent or mercury vapor; sodium vapor lights should not be used.

Street Signs: All traffic and other directional signs should be uniform in design and, when possible, should utilize international symbols. The number of signs should be kept to the necessary minimum.

Private Signs: Since there should be no commercial property abutting the proposed street (except at the intersection with Jefferson Boulevard) because of the proposed development of the regional park along its entire length, private signs, including billboards, are not necessary and should be prohibited along the route in order to protect and enhance the park setting and the vistas available from this scenic route.

Utility Poles: All utilities should be placed underground along the street right-of-way. Overhead lines should not laterally cross the street.

3. Implementation

Future plans for the improvement of the proposed extension of Duquesne Avenue should include the above design standards. There are three governmental agencies potentially involved with the street extension: the City

of Culver City, the County of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Community College District. Depending upon subsequent mutual contractual agreements among any of these three agencies, the acquisition of the right-of-way land and the street and parkway improvements would occur per established procedures for such improvements. The prohibition of private signs may be implemented with existing laws or future legislation.

C. Stocker Street Extension

1. Designation Criteria

Stocker Street as it presently exists is a County arterial street traversing the eastern part of the Baldwin Hills between Crenshaw and La Cienega Boulevards. Additionally, there exists a partially improved section of Stocker Street serving as the southerly boundary of West Los Angeles College between Overland Avenue and Sophomore Drive.

The extension of Stocker Street as proposed by the County of Los Angeles -- which is not included in the Culver City Circulation Element -- would connect these two existing sections of the street by traversing the Baldwin Hills north of the Culver Crest and Ladera Heights residential neighborhoods.

Similar to the proposed extension of Duquesne Avenue, the extension of Stocker Street will also be an important arterial serving both West Los Angeles College and the proposed regional park while traversing through a natural park setting and will also provide scenic vistas of the Marina del Rey, the Santa Monica Bay, the Santa Monica Mountains, and of the skylines of Santa Monica and Westwood. Therefore, in the event the street is constructed, Stocker Street extension has the necessary criteria to constitute a scenic route.

2. Development Standards

a. Right-of-Way Utilization.

The County of Los Angeles presently proposes a 100-foot-wide right-of-way. This is to be a 14-foot-wide median and two 37-foot-wide roadways on each side of the median. These will accommodate two traffic lanes and a parking lane. The remainder of the right-of-way will be two six-foot-wide parkways.

More appropriate for such a route through the regional park would be to eliminate the parking lane in order to expand the parkways which would permit a right-of-way design similar to the proposed right-of-way for the extension of Duquesne Avenue. The parkways could then incorporate parallel bikeways that would serve the regional park.

b. Median Development.

The median should be constructed with standard raised curbs to restrict cars from crossing the median or making other potentially hazardous maneuvers. Breaks in the median should be minimized. However, left-turn pockets should be located in the median and should occur at all intersecting streets and at any park access road.

Median landscaping should reflect the park development abutting the street. Where the park will be landscaped and irrigated, the median should be similarly landscaped and irrigated.

Where native shrubs are to remain, the median should similarly include native plants. In addition, large trees and shrubs appropriate for this environment should be planted in the median and along the parkways. Examples of such plants include the species rhus, ceanothus, modrones, lynothamus, and berberis.

c. Parkway Development.

The parkways are proposed to be constructed with rolled curbs and gutters that will enable emergency off-road parking. The development plans should show standard raised curbs at those locations where adjoining terrain presents a hazardous condition.

Similar to the standards for the extension of Duquesne Avenue, turn-out areas for parking should be provided at those locations offering vistas of the surrounding territory. Bikeways should also be constructed in the parkways if the width of the parkways is adequate.

Parkway landscaping should reflect the park development abutting the street similar to the landscaping standards described above for median improvements.

d. General Development.

Street Lights: Street light standards should be double-masted and located in the median. In the event medians are not constructed, light standards should be located along both sides of the street in the parkways. The standards shall be regularly spaced and uniform in design for the entire length of Stocker Street between Overland Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard. Due to the high visibility of this potential hillside street, the street lighting should not be aesthetically offensive because of excessive glare or discoloration. All lighting should, therefore, be either incandescent or mercury vapor. Sodium vapor lights should not be used.

Street Signs: All traffic and other directional signs should be uniform in design and, when possible, should utilize international symbols. The number of signs should be kept to the necessary minimum.

Private Signs: Since the only properties that will be abutting the proposed street are college, park, cemetery, and single-family residential uses (no commercial), there is no need for commercial signs. Therefore, private signs, including billboards, should be prohibited along the entire route in order to protect and enhance

the park setting and the vistas available from this route.

Utility Poles: All utilities should be placed underground along the street right-of-way. Overhead lines should not laterally cross the street.

3. Implementation

The extension of Stocker Street from its present termination at Sophomore Drive to La Cienega Boulevard is presently not recognized by the Circulation Element of the General Plan as being a necessary transportation route. However, as community conditions and needs change in the future, the need for this street may arise. It could then become an adopted route of the Circulation Element and thereby may be constructed, at which time the development requirements described in this element would then be in effect.

If this occurs, the existing County plans for the street should be amended to include the above design standards.

The prohibition of private signs may be implemented with existing laws or future legislation.

D. Ballona Creek

1. Designation Criteria

Ballona Creek, originally a natural, meandering creek, was straightened, deepened, and concrete-lined in the 1930's as a flood control channel. In the process, however, the creek acquired a wide and relatively uniform right-of-way which traverses diagonally through much of the City from the northerly City limit near La Cienega and Washington Boulevards to the southwesterly City limit along the Sunkist Park residential neighborhood. The flood control channel right-of-way varies from 100 feet in width where it enters the City to 200 feet in width where it exits the City.

The channel passes several residential neighborhoods, several public schools, including the high school and junior high school, the public library, and several parks, including the proposed regional park in the Baldwin Hills. Additionally, it continues to the Pacific Ocean beside the Marina del Rey harbor entrance. Near the ocean, part of the channel's right-of-way is used for a section of the Venice Bikeway (which is a segment of a regional bikeway route along Santa Monica Bay).

Therefore, due to its physical and visual impact upon the community because of its width and because of its route through the City, due to its proximity to parks and other public facilities, and due to its utilization potential because of the above reasons, the Ballona Creek flood control channel has the necessary criteria to constitute a scenic route through Culver City.

2. Development Standards

The potential development of the Ballona Creek as a scenic route is described in detail in the report entitled "Ballona Creek Bikeway and Greenbelt" prepared by Lampman and Associates and the City of Culver City and initially used by the City for an application for funding assistance from the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in June, 1972. This element hereby adopts the conceptual drawings prepared for this application as part of this Scenic Routes Plan. (These plans are subject to subsequent changes due to relocation of the bike route or other engineering requirements.)

Additional reference should be made to Part 5-A of the Culver City Recreation Element of the General Plan which establishes certain criteria for bikeways and greenbelts.

3. Implementation

The development of the Ballona Creek flood control channel into a scenic route (bikeway and greenbelt) is dependent upon the mutual involvement of the City of Culver

City, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

At present, the City is actively pursuing various funding opportunities. Additional involvement must be made in terms of acquiring public access to portions of the flood control channel that are presently privately owned easements.

III. Designated Major Boulevards

III. Designated Major Boulevards

In addition to those routes that merit special attention and are, therefore, designated as scenic routes, there are other streets that constitute the major circulation routes or areas of business activity within Culver City. For these streets, designated as "Major Boulevards," there are general development standards. Additional major boulevards may be added to this list by subsequent amendments to this element.

A. The designated Major Boulevards for Culver City are:

Adams Boulevard
Beethoven Street*
Braddock Drive
Bristol Parkway
Buckingham Parkway
Canfield Avenue (Ince extension)
Canterbury Drive
Centinela Avenue
Culver Boulevard
Duquesne Avenue
Elenda Street
Fairfax Avenue
Freshman Drive
Green Valley Circle
Hannum Avenue
Higuera Street
Hughes Avenue
Ince Boulevard (between Culver and Lindblade)
Inglewood Boulevard
La Cienega Boulevard
Lucerne Avenue
Main Street
McLaughlin Avenue
National Boulevard
Overland Avenue
Playa Street
Redwood Avenue*
Robertson Boulevard
Sawtelle Boulevard
Sepulveda Boulevard
Slauson Avenue
Walgrove Avenue
Washington Boulevard
Washington Place
Venice Boulevard
Proposed Lindblade Street (between Duquesne and Ince)

Streets marked by an asterisk (*) exist within the corporate limits of Culver City for a distance of 100 feet or less. They have been designated by the City of Los Angeles for future widening and, if widened, the Culver City portions should conform with the improvement standards to be adopted by Los Angeles.



DESIGNATED MAJOR BOULEVARDS
(See text for complete list)

Diagram 5. DESIGNATED MAJOR BOULEVARDS

B. General Development Evaluation and Standards

1. Medians

Culver City presently has few landscaped medians. Of the listed major boulevards, only Jefferson Boulevard between Kinston Avenue and Pearson Street, Overland Avenue between Freshman Drive and Virginia Avenue, Centinela Avenue between Sepulveda Boulevard and Mesmer Avenue, a short length of Canterbury Drive near Hannum Avenue, and those portions of the three major streets (Sepulveda, Slauson, and Hannum) abutting the regional shopping center have landscaped medians. Additionally, there are landscaped traffic islands at the intersection of Washington Boulevard, Washington Place, and Tilden Avenue, and at the intersection of Washington Boulevard, Washington Place, and Wade Street. One of the major deterrents to medians in Culver City is the relatively narrow street rights-of-way common to Culver City. Realizing that the majority of the streets listed as major boulevards require two traffic lanes per direction in addition to a parking lane, a minimum right-of-way width of 100 feet is necessary for the accommodation of a median. Many of the listed major boulevards do not have that width.

Additionally, streets such as Washington Boulevard which is 100 feet wide for most of its length have many frequently intersecting streets and driveways which must be served with left-turn pockets. These left-turn pockets must be located within the median and thereby reduce or prohibit the use of the median for landscaping.

Wherever the above conditions do not exist or may be remedied by increasing the right-of-way width, reducing the number of traffic lanes, or eliminating the parking lanes, landscaped street medians should be installed.

As most of Culver City's manufacturing and commercial streets were developed without privately maintained landscaping, median landscaping can often provide the only landscaping, other than parkway trees, that can soften the immediately surrounding environment of concrete and asphalt paving. Medians can visually reduce the apparent paved width of the street and thereby heighten the identity of opposite sides of the street.

Median landscaping should consist of planting material capable of withstanding direct sun and automobile fumes. Low growing ground cover should not be solely used unless the median is mounded several feet in height. Otherwise, shrubs two-to-four feet in height in addition to tall growing trees are necessary if the median is to be developed to full visual potential.

Medians can also accommodate double-masted street light standards which can, in turn, halve the number of

street light poles needed along a street. This will also reduce the "visual clutter" that presently exists along the sides of many streets with competing signs and utility poles.

2. Parkways

Evaluating and establishing standards for parkways is difficult due to the greatly varied parkway widths and abutting land uses in Culver City. The majority of the parkways in residential areas have a five-foot-wide sidewalk abutting the side property line and a planting strip of varying widths between the sidewalk and curb. The planting strip typically has grass or ivy and may or may not have street trees, the species and spacing of which can vary depending upon the street.

The landscaping in the parkway planting strips in the residential areas is generally provided and maintained by the abutting property owner. This allows the parkway's landscaping to complement the landscaping of the private property behind it. But in actuality, the parkway landscaping is usually poorly maintained grass which has no aesthetic value for the street or the neighborhood. An alternative would be to establish common landscaping standards for the planting areas along the entire length of a given parkway. However, differing degrees of maintenance by each of the abutting property owners could rapidly end any uniformity or continuity of appearance. City maintenance of non-scenic route parkways would probably be prohibitively costly.

In commercial and manufacturing areas, the parkways are usually fully paved with only street trees planted in tree wells. This is necessitated by the heavier pedestrian traffic in commercial areas and the desire for minimized maintenance in both commercial and manufacturing areas.

In these nonresidential areas, few parkways offer enough width to accommodate the necessarily wide sidewalks and landscaping strips. Whenever additional street right-of-way is acquired, it is usually utilized for additional traffic or parking lanes or for street medians, rarely for additional parkway width. In those few cases where adequate parkway exists to provide for a sidewalk abutting the storefronts, a planter area, and another narrow paved area along the curb for use by persons exiting parked automobiles, such planters should be installed and maintained with two-foot to four-foot-high landscaping material comparable to that used in medians. Utilization of grass or other low ground cover in commercial areas is not recommended as it is difficult to maintain due to inevitable pedestrian traffic upon it.

In the nonresidential areas where the parkway width is inadequate to accommodate a planter area, small raised

planter boxes and other containers may be utilized and planted (preferably with flowering specimens). That the containers are raised protects them from being trodden upon and enables them to be visible to passing vehicles. The small area required by these containers enables them to be placed near the curb in the comparable location utilized by light standards, refuse containers, and benches so that they are not intruding into the pedestrian "corridor" along the sidewalk. Additionally, as these containers do not constitute a continuous planter, access to parked cars is not restricted. The quantity of such landscaping is controlled by the spacing of such containers.

There are very few streets in either the residential or nonresidential areas whose parkways cannot accommodate street trees. Trees unquestionably offer the greatest aesthetic benefit to any street by visually softening what are otherwise very hard and rigid urban surfaces. When planted uniformly along a streetside, trees can visually unify the entire streetscape, making very different land uses or very differently designed structures appear more compatible. The primary emphasis in Culver City on parkway landscaping should be with the planting of trees.

Street trees should be of the same species and uniformly spaced on both sides of a given street; spacing should be between twenty-five and thirty-five feet on center. In commercial areas, the trees species should not be so dense as to totally obscure storefronts and signs. Examples of acceptable trees include certain species of acacia, betula, eucalyptus, ficus, hymenoporus, and melaleuca.

3. Street Lights

When possible, street lights should be double-masted and located in the street median. This will enable the number of light poles to be reduced by one-half. Otherwise, the light standards should be located along both parkways and should be uniformly spaced and uniform in design.

In order to aesthetically enhance the evening streetscape in Culver City, lights creating discoloration or glare should be eliminated. Therefore, street lighting should be either incandescent or mercury vapor; sodium vapor lights should not be used.

4. Street Signs

All traffic and other directional signs should be uniform in design and when possible should utilize international symbols. The number of signs should be kept to the necessary minimum.

5. Private Signs

Private commercial signs, in addition to utility poles,

are unquestionably the most responsible for the unattractiveness of the commercial streets in Culver City. A reduction in both their numbers and size is the obvious remedy. They should also not project over the public right-of-way, as this can create a visual "overlapping" effect that can essentially make the streetscape into one continuous maze of signs. As a result, the architecture of the buildings becomes nonexistent. Present City sign regulations are inadequate to prevent this from occurring and should be modified.

Whenever possible, billboards should be prohibited. Aesthetically, they offer nothing to a streetscape.

6. Utility Poles

All utilities should be placed underground along the street right-of-way. Overhead lines should not laterally cross the street.

7. Street Furniture

The City should make available at frequent intervals along all commercial major boulevards benches, public telephones, drinking fountains, and refuse containers. Bus benches should be provided with coverings that protect waiting passengers from the sun or rain.

8. Private landscaping

Until recently, virtually all nonresidential property was not required to be developed with building setbacks or landscaping. As a result, the majority of the nonresidential major boulevards lack private landscaping. However, all new construction and major alterations along the street are required to provide privately maintained landscaping. Over time, as new and replacement construction become predominant along the streets, this private landscaping should remedy the lack of landscaping along the parkways. Existing structures that do have some setback from the front property line should be encouraged to provide landscaping.

9. Architectural Design

Until 1974, there was very little control on the quality of design of new structures, additions, or alterations. As a result, owners of well designed structures were frequently rewarded for their efforts with a very unattractive and incompatible structure being built next door which only detracted from the better structure. As a result, architectural design City-wide has suffered. While it will take many years of replacement construction or alterations to significantly eliminate the established bad situation along the Culver City streets, architectural review should be maintained as one of the City's highest priorities for the improvement of the environment along

along all of its streets.

10. Implementation

The City should establish a priority list of streets requiring landscaping, especially street trees, and embark upon a program of installing median and parkway landscaping.

Undergrounding utility districts should continue to be established to systematically underground all overhead utility lines. Legislation should be prepared to restrict new overhead lines from being located within an area where lines have been previously placed underground. The placement of utilities underground should be done in conjunction with redevelopment projects whenever possible.

City restrictions on private signing should be improved to prevent the visual obliteration of building facades and roof lines.

Other existing legislation such as property maintenance requirements and parking lot improvement of the standards will additionally aid in the preservation and improvement of the streetscapes. Proposed legislation requiring street right-of-way dedication from new developments abutting the street will enable a more rapid development of parkway and median improvements.

IV. Scenic Focal Points

IV. Scenic Focal Points

There exist certain structures and parcels of land that, while not part of any street right-of-way, definitely contribute to the visual amenities of Culver City's streetscapes or have the potential to do so due to their location. These scenic focal points should be preserved or developed, depending upon the situation, as part of the City's implementation programs for developing its scenic routes and major boulevards. Additionally, there exists the concept of developing City identification where most of the major boulevards and scenic routes enter the City limits. Such locations can be referred to as City portals.

A. Portal Development

The development of City portals essentially means the creation of some method of informing motorists that they have just crossed from one municipal jurisdiction into another. This can be handled as simply and ineffectively as a sign stating such or it can be as elaborate as actually erecting structures that would serve as true portals. Other methods include utilizing vertical monuments such as obelisks, clock towers, or super graphics which can be located in either narrow parkways or medians; low profile signs that are often treated like an architectural facade and are usually incorporated into the landscaping of wide medians; or simply by a significant change in the environment at the City boundary. This last method can be achieved by significantly changing the species and increasing the quantity of landscaping, by significantly changing the style and decreasing the quantity of signs, by unifying the City's architecture with a common theme (e.g., Spanish tile roofs), or by a combination of any of these, in addition to other means.

Due to the diversity of street widths and designs and of the varying land uses at different edges of the City, more than one method of creating portal identification should be utilized for the different parts of this City. This Scenic Route Plan does not make any recommendation as to what methods should be used; however, the City should begin analyzing each of the locations where a major boulevard or a scenic route enters the City, determine the appropriate type of portal identification for each location, and implement the installation or creation of same. This should be done whenever feasible but especially in conjunction with any street improvement projects or redevelopment projects.

B. Special Focal Points

Below is a list of structures or parcels of land, existing or potential, that can contribute to the visual amenities of Culver City's scenic routes and major boulevards. Additional locations may be added to this list by subsequent amendments to this element.

1. Media Park

This existing park, approximately one-half acre in size, will soon exceed its original size of almost one and one-half acres when the realignment of Venice Boulevard is completed. This park, abutting the Culver Boulevard Scenic Route, should be acquired from the City of Los Angeles and developed as the primary portal into downtown Culver City.

2. Washington Triangles

There exist two locations where Washington Boulevard and Washington Place merge at an acute angle: at Tilden Avenue and at Wade Street. Both of these intersections create very visible parcels of land to approaching motorists which should be developed as focal points.

The triangular parcel at Tilden Avenue is presently occupied by a service station most noted for its excessive signing. This land should be acquired and developed into a landscaped "minipark" that would complement the new Tellefson Park across the street.

The triangular parcel at Wade Street is presently occupied by a snackstand and a carwash. The latter need not be removed as just the furthest tip of this parcel should be landscaped in order to complement the existing landscaping in the traffic islands.

3. Japanese Garden

Presented in 1974 by Kaizuka, Japan, Culver City's Sister City, this garden of small conifers, yews, stone pagodas, and rocks is located along Overland Avenue in front of the community's public library. Unfortunately, parking needs along Overland Avenue restrict the garden's visibility. If a remedy to the parking shortage may be found, the City should restrict parking in front of the Japanese Garden to assure its visibility to passing motorists. Additionally, the removal of the parking lane at that location would enable the parkway to be widened and further landscaped which, in turn, would benefit the small garden.

4. Building Landmarks

Below is a list of structures that must be considered landmarks due to their visual prominence and unique architectural contribution to the streetscape. The City should protect their existence and through such means as redevelopment instigate their rehabilitation and possible reuse.

- (a) Culver Hotel, 9400 Culver Boulevard
- (b) Culver City "Desilu" Studios Administration Bldg. and lawn
9336 Washington Blvd.
- (c) City Hall and Fire Station Complex
9760-9770 Culver Blvd.
- (d) Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Administration Bldg.
10130 Washington Blvd.
- (e) Metro-Godwyn-Mayer Collonade
10202 Washington Blvd.

V. Appendices

Appendix A

Railroad Right-of-Way for Culver Boulevard

Within this report, the railroad right-of-way is referred to as the twenty feet (ten feet on each side of the centerline of the tracks) that must be kept clear of any fixed objects such as curbs, poles, or plants. The "ten-feet-from-centerline" clearance requirement is a requirement of the Southern Pacific Railroad, whereas the Public Utilities Commission has only an "eight-and-one-half-feet-from-centerline" clearance requirement. In addition to this clear area, the railroad also has need for additional right-of-way width to locate necessary equipment and markers for the operation of the rail line. General right-of-way standards for the Southern Pacific Railroad call for a minimum overall right-of-way width of between twenty-five and thirty feet. This could be readily accommodated with the 32-foot median proposed for Culver Boulevard. This would, however, mean that most of the landscaping and all of necessary traffic control equipment (traffic signals) must be located within this railroad right-of-way. Southern Pacific Railroad has to date been uncooperative in granting easements for such without compensation; landscaped land -- to be fully maintained by the City -- would have to be leased on an annual basis. For these reasons, in the final determination of railroad and street rights-of-way widths, a minimization of the amount of railroad land with which the City would have to be involved would be to the City's benefit.



Appendix B

CITY OF CULVER CITY

9770 CULVER BLVD. • CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA 90230

(213) 837-5211

P.O. BOX 507

ORIGINAL FILED

Date: August 4, 1975

AUG - 7 1975

County Clerk
Corporations Division -- Room 106
Post Office Box 151
Los Angeles, California 90053

~~Clarence E. Cabell, County Clerk~~

RE: **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**
For: Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan
(project)

Gentlemen:

The City of Culver City has prepared a draft of its Scenic Highway Element for adoption to amend the City's General Plan. The Scenic Highway Element establishes policy and improvement standards for the development of major streets within the City. The standards include provisions for increased landscaping, pedestrian and bikeway amenities, and the elimination of over-land utility lines and excessive signing.

In accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act, State Guidelines, and Culver City Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, the Division of Planning and Community Development of the City of Culver City analyzed the project and determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment. Based on this finding the Division prepared and hereby files this **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**.

A period of ten (10) working days from the date of filing of this **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be provided to enable public review of the project specifications and this document prior to action on the project by the City of Culver City. A copy of the project specifications is on file in the Offices of the Division of Planning and Community Development, City Hall, Culver City.

This document is being filed in duplicate. Please acknowledge filing date and return the acknowledged copy in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelop.

Prepared and filed by:
The Division of Planning and Community Development

By: William Barnett
William Barnett
Planning Division

AUG 7 1975

COR.

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